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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FLORES).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 26, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BILL FLORES to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, with the unfortunate Arizona State immigration law under review by the Supreme Court, it's an appropriate time to take a step back and look at the big picture. Mexico is exhibiting some of the demographic changes taking place around the world that are seen in the most extreme forms in places like Japan and Italy, where birth rates are falling, their populations are aging,

and dramatic stress is placed upon their economies.

It's not yet to that point in Mexico, but the game has definitely changed. In contrast, the United States has had a growing and vibrant population, in no small measure because we've been energized from people around the world. It's time to consider our immigration policies and practices for the future.

Even though there's been no more contentious issue in American politics than that of immigration, the situation surrounding Mexican immigration has changed profoundly. As I mentioned, the birth rate is falling, and for the first time as many people are leaving the United States for Mexico as are arriving from Mexico in the United States.

Illegal entry is clearly declining. The number of arrests at the border demonstrates that. People are being deported in greater numbers than ever before. It's not that there isn't still a problem. There are still some bad actors coming across the border, no mistake about it.

There are important opportunities to concentrate on what's important, such as people who are dealing with drugs, pose security threats, and who are criminals. Wasting resources on a scattershot effort on people who are here just to work or to be with their families is not particularly a wise use of resources, and it doesn't make us any safer.

It's past time to deal with the millions of people who are already here and part of the fabric of our communities. Often, they are with families that include children who are citizens and other family members who are citizens as part of an extended family. It's not just the members of those extended families that rely on one another; America relies on these millions of people, as the Alabama legislature found out with draconian efforts to try and deal with illegal immigrants—and

legal immigrants, by the way—that ended up almost ruining a number of their farmers, and their legislature had to backtrack.

Immigrants have always been a source of America's strength. Our current policies inflict damage to the realities of those family ties, especially to children who are already citizens.

We also do other dumb things. We deny VISAs to smart people who are educated at great expense at some of the finest institutions in America with important skills that will be valuable to business. We make it hard for them to work here. Unfortunately, if their skills are going to be utilized, too often they end up being hired by foreign overseas competitors, or American companies have to create jobs for them overseas.

There are a half-dozen pieces of legislation in a piecemeal fashion that will make it better. One of the most important is the DREAM Act, which would allow children who were brought here at an early age to be able to earn the right to citizenship if they have done well with their education or serve in the military.

I'm pleased to see all of these different pieces of legislation that would bring a measure of rationality and fairness gaining support. The most important thing we can do is return to that spirit of bipartisan cooperation that was exhibited by the late Ted Kennedy and, by the way, how JOHN MCCAIN used to be, before he ran for reelection in today's Arizona, because they were sponsoring comprehensive immigration reform. They didn't rely on half a dozen pieces of legislation, but really looked at the problem holistically for the people involved, for the community, and for the country. They would have a thoughtful path to citizenship that people could earn, not being granted amnesty but by paying taxes, learning the language, demonstrating a clear commitment to what it takes to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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be a constructive part of the community.

Comprehensive immigration reform is what ultimately will help us unwind this problem, save money and heartache, and get about the business of building a stronger American future for all our families.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor again, as I have in the past 2 years, to talk about the location of high-level nuclear waste around this country and compare and contrast it with where we have high-level nuclear waste, mostly spent nuclear fuel, but other types defined as waste, and compare it to where it should be based upon a 1982 law, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act and the 1987 amendment to that law which identified Yucca Mountain as the location where we should be storing high-level nuclear waste.

Today we go to the Pennsylvania and West Virginia areas, and we compare Yucca Mountain with a nuclear power plant called Limerick. At Yucca Mountain, currently there is no nuclear waste on site. At Limerick, there are 1,143 metric tons of uranium spent nuclear fuel on the site. At Yucca Mountain, the waste would be stored, if it's there, a thousand feet underground. At Limerick, you can see waste is stored aboveground in pools and casks. That's above ground.

If it was stored in Yucca Mountain, it would be a thousand feet above the water table. Why is that? Well, Yucca Mountain is in a desert, so that's why the water table is very, very low. Well, at Limerick, the waste is stored 20 feet above the groundwater.

Finally, Yucca Mountain is 100 miles from the Colorado River. Limerick is on the Schuylkill River 40 miles from Philadelphia. Yucca is about 100 miles from Las Vegas, Nevada. The importance of this is just to address with Fukushima Daiichi, and nuclear waste, and some difficulties we've had, and public policy being as defined by law. The question is, why do we still have nuclear waste in Pennsylvania right outside Philadelphia, and why don't we have it underneath a mountain in a desert?

The answer is—I know it would shock people—politics here in Washington, especially in the other Chamber, not complying with the law, along with an administration that is in league with those who have blocked a final scientific study for Yucca Mountain. What I have been doing is going around and looking at the senators from the States around the nuclear power plants that I have been addressing.

Where do they stand individually? Well, Senator CASEY, a relatively new Senator, has really been silent on that, although he has said, as a Senator from a State with 9 commercial reactors and

10 million people living within 50 miles of those reactors, I can tell you that nuclear security is extremely important to Pennsylvanians. Obviously the nuclear waste is not that important to him since he has been silent on Yucca Mountain.

Senator TOOMEY is quoted as saying the alternative is what we have now, highly active radio waste located at 131 sites in 39 States, including nuclear power plants close to the Lehigh Valley. That cannot be as safe and secure as burying the waste deep in Yucca Mountain. I would agree with the Senator.

Senator MANCHIN from West Virginia, who is relatively new, has been silent on what we should do with the high-level nuclear waste. Part of this process is to identify that and hopefully have him come out in a statement. Senator ROCKEFELLER voted "no." His statement is, nuclear energy is touted by its proponents as a carbon-free option that should have its share of the Nation's electricity generation expanded.

□ 1010

Yet we have never figured out what to do about the permanent storage and human health and safety concerns regarding high radioactive waste with a half-life measured in tens of thousands of years. That's where I very much disagree with the Senator, because the Federal Government has spent 20 years and \$9 billion studying Yucca Mountain. Unprecedented 100 million-year projections were completed showing Yucca's safety. There is no safer place in the entire United States for nuclear waste than Yucca Mountain.

So, then, I've been doing a tally across the country of the Senators and where they stand as of today. We have 48 who support Yucca Mountain and high-level nuclear waste; 18, we don't know. Hopefully, they'll get a chance to cast a vote. And we have 20 who are "no." In the filibuster world that operates in the other Chamber, you know we really need 60. We're very close. In fact, if 12 of these 18 undecideds are "yes," there should be no reason why we would allow Senator REID and the President of the United States to block further development and movement to take all of our high-level nuclear waste and store it safely in a mountain in a desert.

QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Yesterday, the guest chaplain asked that the House of Representatives be blessed and that each Member of the House of Representatives be blessed. In our opportunity to be free in our expression of religion, I ask that each of us bless this Nation. For that reason, I set this morning to discuss just a series of

issues, hoping that we can improve the quality of life of not only Americans, but people around the world.

First, we have to clean up our house. And so I express outrage of the actions of two former TSA workers—TSO officers and two present TSO officers.

All of us can fall short because we are human, but the outrage of participating in drug trafficking right here in the United States as an official of the United States Government should be condemned by all of us, and I will call for immediate hearings to ensure that the culture of TSO officers, besides their frontline duty, is to respect the job and the task. As a champion of their work, believing that their work is vital to the security of this Nation and the fact that we have not been attacked on our soil since 9/11, I call for immediate investigation and response.

This morning, as well, we determined that the Secret Service, who finished quickly an investigation of the Colombian debacle dealing with sex workers, prostitutes, we now have discovered through a contractor that, in fact, actions occurred in El Salvador. We thought it might not be the culture. But let's own up and begin, as necessary, to purge those who are reckless in their behavior. Thank you to the men and women of the Secret Service who have always done their duty. But to the dastardly deeds of these who think it's a playground: Get out now. There is no tolerance for this kind of behavior.

Let me move immediately to the work in Syria. I was the first Member to go to the Syrian Embassy to ask for the fall, or the removal, of Dr. Assad, and we have been moving along while others have been slaughtered. Meetings and discussions at the U.N. National Security Council, a special envoy—"do this and do that"—while women and children are being slaughtered, it is time for there to be a stronger statement on the removal of Dr. Assad and the increase in U.N. peacekeepers. The people need your help in Syria. The bloodshed continues and the fear is insurmountable, almost. It is necessary on behalf of their human rights to be able to move quickly in Syria.

As the Supreme Court has discussed the Arizona law, I hope that we can bless America by having comprehensive immigration reform. I hope we can understand that there are laws that work well. Just helping a Korean student who was shot in my jurisdiction whose father was denied entry because of his language and didn't understand, he now has been granted humanitarian parole. Let's have comprehensive immigration reform so that we don't have States who are stopping families who are U.S. citizens in the streets of Arizona, profiling them because of this dastardly law, that we don't have police officers having to become immigration officers while they need to be rescuing people and saving people. Let's do the decent thing. Let's bless America and have comprehensive immigration reform.